

1. Convene the meeting.

Chairman William Campbell convened the Board at 7:00PM on the above date in the Nowak Room. Present: Lionel Ingram, Paul Binette, Robert Eastman, Joseph Pace and Town Manager George Olson.

2. Minutes of Selectmen's meeting of August 30, 2004.

Mr. Pace moved to waive the reading of the minutes and to accept them as submitted; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: 4-0, with Mr. Binette abstaining.

3. Bid opening – sale of pressure cleaner.

None received.

4. Update on construction of new High School – Walter Pierce, SAU 16.

Mr. Pierce was present to update the Board on the progress of the construction since April 12th. He reported:

- The access road has been built;
- Surcharge has been completed in 2 of 4 classroom wings;
- Logging done in the "field" sites;
- Excavation of the footprint of the building
- Architectural design is complete (May);
- Balance of the bid has been put out (June)
- Finalization of the construction budget completed in July

Construction began May 4th. They developed a plan with Unitil on the 3-phase power installation on Old Town Farm Road – carried 10' lower than anticipated and having a tighter carry for the lines. The progress on the buffer between the grounds and Old Town Farm Road and residents is continuing. Fill from the athletic fields' locations was taken to the parking lot areas. There are 5 detention ponds around the site. Fields at the entrance are being graded; storage of materials is currently in the area of the track and multi-purpose field. Mr. Pierce noted that residents may wonder why ball fields are going in before buildings. Once the fill is dug out of the field areas, it must be stabilized, so irrigation and appropriate fill is put in and will allow for two growing seasons prior to the first use of play.

Mr. Ingram asked if there have been any surprises. Mr. Pierce stated no except for the major rain events. The project is on schedule despite the wet summer.

Mr. Pierce provided a photo show of various construction areas including utility work & footings, site work on the fields and groundbreaking pictures.

Chairman Campbell asked if the traffic analysis had been completed. The first report is back and additional counts have been requested. The Turf Management Plan has been submitted to the Wetlands Board and the "use" provided in the application is being used now. The final plan is not yet complete.

Mr. Eastman expressed concern whether the buffer zone between the school and the abutters is proceeding. Mr. Pierce noted along the east pond, a large berm is being installed and trees will be planted. They are currently determining the maximum distance needed in the area just south of that on Old Town Farm Road, abutting some wetlands, so that may be an obstacle, but he looks for a good visual and acoustical barrier.

Mr. Eastman asked about the dust control and the noise ordinance (7AM start), noting he heard some mornings the start was earlier. Mr. Pierce stated he also had heard about them, as he was called when it happened. They are not to be starting equipment prior to 7, though workers arrive before that. The dust control truck has been there most of the time, when not raining, unless going for more water.

Tony Callendrello, 63 Old Town Farm Road, thanked the Board for their follow-up of the public hearing of a year ago. He noted, in general, the noise has not been much before 7 but it does start at 7. The buffering and berm are going well and they continue to work on that process. He hopes the trees will be installed soon, in order to take prior to the cold season.

He asked of the run-offs, particularly the one leading to the culvert across from 67 Old Town Farm Road. The run-off going to this area will come from the parking lots into the residential area and he is concerned with gas/oil spills, etc. He also expressed concern over the irrigation and how much water will be available from the detention ponds and/or needed from the wells. He had also sent a letter to the Co-Op last March inquiring about other concerns: operating hours on the weekends; outdoor bells (perhaps using music vs. bells to round students up who are outside); lighting at the lots and stadium, not wishing to "turn night into day" with so many lights placed high on poles and suggested lower lighted poles; parking on Old Town Farm Road, near the access to the property and suggested 'no parking' signs be considered by the Town.

Mr. Pierce stated the irrigation process utilizing the ponds (at one acre and one foot deeper than originally planned) will hold a considerable amount of water and the wells are supplemental. The run-off to the Town culvert goes through the wetlands and detention pond/swale, which should filter out any problems from the lot.

The Board thanked Mr. Pierce for attending. He will return in 6-8 weeks with a further update.

5. Parks Advisory Committee –request for inactive status – Dwane Staples, Chairman.

Mr. Olson noted the Committee met for over 5 years and had provided a 5-year plan for improvement to the Town's parks. Dwane Staples, Chairman stated the first meeting was 9/30/88 and the Committee was met with a charge to "provide a 5-year timeline of specific activities leading to better maintenance of parks, including a list of specific needs by year, up-front costs and long term maintenance costs, and proposal for funding park improvement as well as routine maintenance". The original Committee consisted of Mr. Staples, Wayne Raymond, Charles Tucker, Betsy MacDonald, Peter Kennedy, Amy Bailey (Selectmen's rep) and Mike Lambert. The final Committee consisted of Mr. Staples, Mrs. MacDonald, Mr. Tucker, Mike LaPerle, Norma Roberts, Kevin Blayne and Paul Binette (Selectmen's rep). Over the years, two other individuals also served at length: Doug Eastman and Paul Scafidi (Selectmen's rep). Mr. Staples requested the Committee be placed on inactive status, as their job has been completed as charged.

Mr. Ingram asked if the Committee would be inactive with these people in place and, should it be reactivated, these people would serve? Mr. Olson noted just the Committee – other folks would be appointed if reactivated.

Mr. Eastman moved to place the Parks Advisory Committee on Inactive status; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.

6. Downtown Restoration Committee –update on round-a-bout – S. von Aulock, Town Planner.

Ms. von Aulock reminded the Board of Mark Moeller's visit to the Board this past summer concerning a field test for the proposed round-a-bout. She proceeded to re-introduce Rueben Hull, Engineer from Civil Design Consultants (Newfields). It was determined that none of the intersections proposed gained any benefits to the present traffic pattern. This has been revisited and the current version (attached) appears that 11 of the 12 movements of a round-a-bout now work. On September 26th, a test of this proposal will take place between 8AM and 2PM with cones set out in the proposed traffic pattern. A report will then be made at the Board's 27th meeting. If the test works well, a 3-week test with cones and barriers will be implemented October 2-22.

Mr. Eastman noted it appears 25 parking spots will be eliminated. Mr. Hull stated a net loss of 19. Mr. Binette has observed a lack of loading/unloading areas, reporting a UPS truck took up 4 spaces when parking parallel across the diagonal lines last week. Mr. Hull stated this will not be part of the test but the overall study of downtown restoration will address this.

Mr. Pace sees a drawback with access to the Bandstand, particularly with the Brass Band concerts during the summer weeks. How will that space be utilized then? Mr. Hull stated the Bandstand will be isolated, separated by the traffic flow. The decision is whether the Bandstand is more of a monument rather than civic space. Five nights during the summer, the traffic could be redirected up Center Street and down Front Street to the right of the Bandstand, blocking the south bound traffic (left of Bandstand) to continue down Water Street.

Mr. Hull noted the proponents of the round-a-bout wish to continue the process. If the test does not work, they will probably stop talking about it.

Arthur Baillargeon, Tremont Street, asked if an officer would be present during the test. Yes, probably two, located at each island on Water Street. For the full 3-week test, the traffic pattern will be more apparent with signs and will look more like a construction site. The Police & Fire Chiefs are reviewing the plan. Mr. Baillargeon asked how the area would be during snow storms and pile up of snow banks. With spaces lacking in the downtown area, it may take more time to move the snow out.

Mr. Ingram asked how the shopkeepers in the vicinity feel about the proposal, including the lack of parking spaces. Mr. Hull noted they have not yet been approached. Mr. Ingram argued that before the plan comes before the Board, the plans should be reviewed by all those involved for their comments. He does not want a public relations committee to 'sell' the project to the store owners.

Tracey McGrail, President of the Chamber, stated the plan only got final approval on Friday and she has not yet spoken with those merchants in the area. The Retail Chairman saw the plan and suggested it go forward to the Board. Mr. Hull stated the storeowners will be approached prior to coming before the Board again.

Peter Dow, member of the committee, stated the outreach to merchants and residents began back with the Visioning sessions, including traffic movements and parking issues. He noted the drawing is very hard to visualize the issues, hence why the in-field tests are being done. He noted the 3-week test won't tell all the changes that will or must be made but we can learn from the experience and inform them of what was found. The benefits of the process may not impress the merchants enough to change their minds. Mr. Ingram urged the Committee to listen to the views of the merchants.

7. Discussion of annual property reassessment update.

Mr. Campbell stated John DeVittori, Town Assessor, has requested the Board accept or deny whether the Board wishes to reevaluate the entire Town or let the assessed values stay at the 2003 base valuation. Vision has completed the second one-third of the Town for field inspections and data corrections. One-third have not been visited and it is his intention to reassess all taxable properties as of April 1st and bring all property to approximately market value.

Mr. Eastman corrected the meeting summary sheet provided to the Board, that he did not request the item on the agenda but that it is the responsibility of the Board to schedule discussion and to give the final word on the assessed values. He quoted RSA 75:8, noting the adjustments should be done "annually, in accordance with state assessing standards" and consider adjustments when properties: have material physical change; change in ownership; undergo zoning changes; undergo changes to exemptions, credits or abatements; undergo subdivision, boundary line adjustments or mergers, or undergo other changes affecting value.

Mr. Eastman does not feel that with, for example, 4.4% of ranch houses sold and assessments gone up, how the Town can justify raising the value on the remaining 96% of ranches.

Mr. Campbell noted two appraisals are currently on-going: 1) Vision to reassess the 1/3 scheduled; 2) the on-going in-house program by the Assessor to change to market value. He noted it would be difficult to keep a home assessed at \$100,000 with no changes when others in the area have higher values.

Mr. Pace stated if using the property tax as a tax system, then we must commit to the property tax being current. He associated this to less than 10% of the voters voting down the budget last year. By reassessing each year to stay current, the Town is not raising 30-60% every 5 years.

Mr. Ingram asked if we fall below 80% what happens? Mr. Olson noted nothing happens in relation to DRA (Dept. of Revenue Administration) but residents become concerned over the value of their homes and will seek abatements. When we revalue, we have fewer than 50 abatement requests. When we have left for over 5 years, we had as many as 300 requests. Most residents seem comfortable with keeping values current.

Mr. Pace moved to support the annual revaluation as proposed by the Assessor; second by Mr. Binette. VOTE: 4-1.

#8 - SEE ATTACHED AMENDMENT
9. Execution of the Raynes Farm Lease.

The Board was presented an agreement, reviewed by Town Counsel, to provide Nathan Merrill (representing Stuart Farm, LLC) with rights to use a portion of the farm for agricultural use. The agreement explains what Mr. Merrill, as well as the public, can and cannot do on the parcel.

Mr. Pace asked what happens with the reference to the LCHIP management and regulations if the State chooses to eliminate LCHIP? Mr. Campbell noted the Town has a warranty deed with LCHIP which has been recorded. He believes this is maintained.

Mr. Pace moved to execute the agreement with the Stuart Farm to utilize the property as outlined; second by Mr. Ingram. VOTE: Unanimous.

10. Proposed budget for 2005.

Mr. Olson noted the Board received their budget packet, CIP project packet and list of warrant articles, to date, at 4:30 this afternoon. The Board will review the items over the next two weeks and will discuss, with department heads, at their meeting of September 27th. Mr. Olson read from his memo to the Board (attached). He noted last year's budget started at a 14% increase. This year's estimated 12% increase includes expenses related to increased costs and playing catch up due to last year's default budget.

Mr. Eastman asked of the MS-4 (estimated Revenues) and when the Board would discuss how much we may reduce taxes by assigning fund balance. Mr. Olson stated this is usually done once a date is set to meet with DRA for the tax rate. Mr. Eastman asked why the MS-4 is sent in without the amount to reduce taxes listed. Mr. Olson replied the form is due by September 17th with no figure listed; the figure is added at our meeting with DRA.

Mr. Ingram asked for the top 10-15 increases that would total the \$1.3 million increase to the budget.

11. Permits:

- The David Barrows Adventure Fund requested permission to place a banner across Water Street from September 17 through October 4th to advertise the Mud in Your Eye 500.
- Seacoast Progressive Alliance requested use of the Town Hall on September 22nd from 7-10PM to show a film entitled "America's Future – Education".
- Churchill's Garden Center requested permission to conduct pumpkin bowling as part of the Fall Festival from 7AM to 5PM on October 16th (takes place in the alley between the Town Hall and Citizen's Bank branch parking lot);
- Exeter Kiwanis requested permission to block spaces by the Bandstand on October 16th for their hot dog sales from 7AM to 3PM;
- Permission for the Bruce Ellis Road Race on November 6th at 10AM throughout town. The insurance certificate has been received and the Police Chief has approved the route.

Mr. Pace questioned the round-a-bout test going on when the Fall Festival is also taking place. Mr. Olson noted if the first two weeks are very good or very bad, the third week may not be needed. They may also wish to keep the test going to see how it works with events going on in the downtown area.

Mr. Ingram moved to approve the permits as presented; second by Mr. Binette. VOTE: Unanimous.

12. Town Manager's Items:

- The State Primary is Tuesday, September 14, 2004 at the Town Hall, with poll hours from 7AM to 8PM.
- Mr. Olson read a drinking water violation news release (attached) occurring this past July, including 'disinfections by-products'. The limit is 80 parts per billion and we exceeded the limit at 85 parts per billion. This is our third violation. Victoria DelGreco, W/S Superintendent, noted this emphasizes the need for a new water plant. Mr. Eastman asked if the 3 violations over the years occurred at the same time of year. Mr. Olson thought two were.
- Household Hazardous Waste is October 2nd from 8:30-12 noon at DPW;
- Fall pick-up of bulky items is the week of November 1st on residents' trash day. Stickers are \$2.50;
- Leaf collection, in bags, is the week of November 15th. Mr. Eastman asked if there will be extended hours at the transfer station this fall. Mr. Olson will confirm.
- Bandstand medallions, made from the old copper roof of the Bandstand, are available at the Town Office for \$20;
- Red, white & blue magnetic ribbons (support your troops) are available for \$3 at the Town Office. The proceeds go toward supplies for our troops and school children (per the troops' requests).
- Women's Club cookbook is available for \$10. To order, call 778-1827.
- Additional covers of the Town Report are available at the Town Office (to frame, save, etc.)

13. Selectmen's Committee Reports

Mr. Eastman: Planning Board met last Thursday to review the CIP.

Mr. Binette: None except for the Parks Advisory Committee being "put out to pasture".

Mr. Pace: HDC meets Thursday to review samples of posts and siding for the new Presbyterian Church; Town Manager Search Committee will meet Wednesday, September 22 at 3PM to discuss our grading system and whittle down resumes. Over 65 were received. He, as Selectmen's Rep to the Library, has been asked to serve on the Library Planning Committee, meeting once per month to set up a long range strategic plan. The Arts Committee has an exhibit "Exeter Remembered" at the Town Hall Gallery and he urges residents to visit, viewing old photos of the Town.

Mr. Ingram: Rockingham Planning Commission is working on the state impact on Towns, concerning warrants, town regulations and changes.

Mr. Campbell: none.

14. Public Comments:

Mr. Eastman noted that at the last meeting, Mr. Alan Bailey had asked questions about how to go into a non-public session. Mr. Eastman stated the Board meets first, makes a motion to resume in a non-public session, stating the reason(s) and calls for a roll call vote. To end, the board moves to come out of the non-public session with a roll call vote and then adjourns.

Mr. Ingram moved to adjourn; second by Mr. Binette. VOTE: Unanimous. Time: 9:05PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara A. Blehn, AA?HR Dir.

(attach)